



Midland Michigan

# BITS AND BYTES

SEPTEMBER 2019

<https://mcc.apcug.org/>

## **ARTICLE INDEX**

**Wi-Fi Security--Protect your communications; don't leave your Wi-Fi Open- Page 2**

By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, FL

**A Great Photoshop Alternative -- Page 3**

By Sheila Swaikowski,

**Clean Your Computer! -- Page 4**

By David Kretchmar

**Do you know these Google Icons? --- Page 6**

By Jim Cerny

**Interesting Articles, Websites and YouTube Videos - April -- Page 7**

By George Cadmus

**No Joy in Techvill? -- Page 8**

By Greg Skalka

**You may have a new speech recognition program -- Page 11**

By Jerry Heaton, Editor, Central Kentucky Computer Society

**Brain Dead In San Diego -- Page 12**

By Art Gresham

**What happens in the downloading process vs. the saving process on a computer? -- Page 13**

By Dan Douglas

**Aukey USB Outlet with Night Light Plug-in -- Page 14**

By Curt Potsic

*Articles in this Newsletter have been obtained from APCUG with the authors' permission for publication by APCUG member groups. The Midland Computer Club has not verified the information contained in the articles nor tested procedures or hardware/software. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midland Computer Club.*

## **GENERAL CLUB MEETING**

Midland Public Schools Administration Building  
600 E Carpenter Street - Room D

**Wednesday, September 25, 2019**

**6:00 P.M.**

## Wi-Fi Security – Protect your communications; don't leave your Wi-Fi Open

By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, FL  
February 2019 - [www.sccccomputerclub.org](http://www.sccccomputerclub.org) - [Philsorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:Philsorr@yahoo.com)

Wi-Fi is all around us. In homes, libraries, airports, shopping centers, recreational places, houses of worship, the CA buildings, just about everywhere. Wi-Fi is the first step in the complex way we get to the internet for information, entertainment, or purchases. Our smartphones, tablets, and computers, more than likely, communicate with a router over Wi-Fi. (I say more than likely because there are still some desktop computers directly connected to routers by wire, using an Ethernet RJ-45 connection). The router in turn connects to a modem (modulator-demodulator) which in turn connects to your ISP (internet service provider). It is the ISP that is the final step and the gateway to the internet and all of its wonderful websites and servers.

Wi-Fi is a wireless communications link. Like any wireless communications, for example radio or tv, it can be intercepted by an antenna and an appropriate receiver. This means that anyone with a laptop (antenna and receiver are integral components), and some special software (commonly called a wireless sniffer) could intercept the wireless signal and “listen in” on your digital communications. I don't mean “listen in” as in hearing with your ears. I mean intercepting the digital data stream that makes up your communications, and interpreting, and possibly recording, the communications content. (Googling “sniffer” reveals that a network sniffer is a software tool that monitors, or sniffs out, the data flowing in a communications link in real time. It can be a self-contained software program or a hardware device with appropriate software or firmware. Wireshark is widely recognized as the world's most popular network sniffer. It is a free, open source application that displays intercepted communications data. In the hands of a skilled user it can intercept communications and even capture passwords from nearby communications activity.) With this computer setup, the person at the next table at your favorite coffee shop could be “listening in” on your every request for information, and the information you receive. This is the reason you are always counseled to never do anything with your financial apps, or any app that accesses personal private data, when you are in a coffee shop setting. The Wi-Fi routers at most of these locations are usually “Open” and not protected. Though the person at the next table is probably not listening to your communications, you should consider all open Wi-Fi communications as if it was available to the public.

So, at home where you will want to use your financial apps, it is important that you secure your Wi-Fi by employing encryption. This guarantees that your Wi-Fi communications cannot be compromised, even if someone with sniffer equipment parks in your driveway where the signal is strong enough to be intercepted. I would bet that most of us already have our Wi-Fi encrypted. Any Wi-Fi that requires a password is using some type of encryption and is therefore protected. Today, there are at least three types of encryption that are used with routers, WEP, WPA, and WPA2. WEP is the oldest and least secure way to encrypt your Wi-Fi, short of leaving it open or unencrypted. A WEP, or “Wired Equivalent Privacy”, password is said to be easy to crack, by those who practice the art of cryptography. WEP will only stop the most casual of users from connecting to a WEP protected network. Common advice is that if your router only supports WEP, you should replace it, post haste. All networks should use one of the stronger encryptions techniques, WPA or WPA2.

WPA or “Wi-Fi Protected Access” is the newer Wi-Fi security standard. There are two versions of WPA - WPA and WPA2. WPA was created as a stop gap solution for devices that originally only supported WEP. It allowed those devices to upgrade to a stronger encryption scheme, WPA, and leave behind the known flaws of WEP. WPA was always only a temporary solution improving the situation, but not expected to be the final solution. The final solution is WPA2. WPA2 is the most secure type of encryption available today for typical home equipment. (The government may have other encryption schemes but that would only be known by people way above my pay grade.) WPA2 is the encryption standard that we should all use on our routers at home. The strength of an encryption scheme comes from the algorithms used and the length of the encryption key. Without

getting into the technical details, WPA2 uses the strongest algorithm and employs very long keys. The WPA2 in this discussion is sometimes called WPA2-Personal. There are other variants of WPA called WPA2-Enterprise that may be even more secure but are intended for large business installations. So, at home when you are setting up your typical home or small business router, make sure your data is protected, (and access to your Wi-Fi is limited), by setting up and using WPA2 Wi-Fi security.

---

## **A Great Photoshop Alternative**

By Sheila Swaikowski, Webmaster, The PCUG of Connecticut  
March issue, The Program - [www.TPCUG-CT.org](http://www.TPCUG-CT.org) - [sswaikowski \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:sswaikowski@yahoo.com)

Gimp is a great free image manipulation program much like Photoshop. Here is a YouTube link to a 13+ minute video of a basic beginners' guide that I found very helpful: Q8C0LJPpr64.mp4. It is entitled 'How to Use Gimp (A Beginners Guide)' and produced by TechGumbo. According to the instructor, Gimp is one of the top five best free Photoshop alternatives and his favorite.

The video begins by showing where to go ([gimp.org](http://gimp.org)) to download Gimp and walks you through the whole download process. Then it goes over the layout you should see when you start Gimp: the primary window in the center, the toolbox on the left and the layers window on the right.

The instructor starts a new project by creating a new image from the file tab at the top. He shows how to scale it down (resize it) and add a background color.

Gimp works with layers, which is a new concept for me. Changes are made on individual layers which become part of the whole exported image at the end. If a change has to be made, you can go back to that particular layer which has what you want to change. You create a new layer from the right layer window. The video shows how to create text in a new layer by going to the toolbox, selecting the text tool, then selecting a different text color and changing the text size. It shows how to use the move tool to move the text anywhere in that layer.

If you don't like what you produced, you can go back to a previous step or steps by going to the Edit tab at the top and choosing Undo Move Text Layer which will undo the last operation or using the shortcut, ctrl z, until you get back to the step you want.

The instructor creates an oval in a new, second layer, by selecting an ellipse tool from the tool box; other options are the rectangle tool or circle tool. He also shows how to use the blend tool in the background to show a color variance in the background.

In this video there are three levels: the background image, the layer with the text and the layer with the oval drawn on it.

When you are done, its time to export the created image by going to the File tab and clicking on Export As and exporting the image in the file type you want, png or jpg being the most popular. Even though you work with each level separately in Gimp, they become one image upon exporting.

If you choose the Save As option in the File tab and also save the image as an .xcf file type, you can retrieve and work on the image later and make changes in the different layers. It seems to me to be a good idea to also save an .xcf file.

So there you have it, a very good, basic beginners video introduction to Gimp. There are other You Tube videos you can find by searching for Gimp that will show you how to do specific things, such as rounding corners in a photo. If you've ever wanted to do photo editing, but hesitated because of the cost of Photoshop, this Gimp tutorial is just what you may need.

---

Kretchmar's Korner

## Clean Your Computer!

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV  
April 2019 issue, Gigabyte Gazette - www.scscclb.club - tomburt89134 (at) cox.net

Windows 10 does a fine job of maintaining your system, but over time users will tend to accumulate bits of data and programs that serve no purpose other than cluttering up your hard drive.

Files such as documents and pictures residing on your hard drive are unlikely to noticeably slow down your system if you have adequate hard drive space. However, software that loads every time the computer is used will eventually cause a significant drag on you system. Many users are running smaller solid-state drives (SSD), so cleaning files can yield improved performance.

### Look at MSCONFIG

Type "msconfig" in your search box. Left mouse click on the application and you'll be at System Configuration. Click on the Services tab then click on the square to "Hide all Microsoft services." Review the services that are running at startup and uncheck any that you don't need.

Click on the Startup tab then on "Open Task Manager" and disable all the items you don't need.

In MSCONFIG we are not uninstalling any apps, just stopping them from loading. If you have unchecked or disabled a process you find you need, it is easy to go back into this area and recheck or enable something.

### Check Your Apps

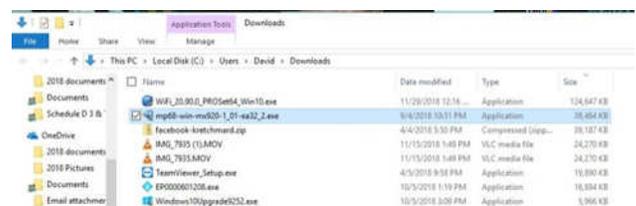
Examine which programs or applications are residing on the system. Right click on the Windows 10 Start button, and then left click on Settings then click on Apps. Sort the Apps by Installation Date. Start at the bottom of the list and on programs you don't use by left clicking on the App then clicking Uninstall.

### Remember the Control Panel?

Once you're done with removing programs in the Apps view, you can review them in the Control Panel. The Control Panel's importance has been degraded by Microsoft and it is not as easy to use as it once was. You'll have to type "Control Panel" in your search box, click on Control Panel then "Programs and features > "Uninstall a Program." You can sort this list more logically by clicking on column holders. Remove programs you no longer use. You can also locate the Control Panel by doing a search in the Settings area.

### Look at Your Downloads Folder

Your Downloads folder should be at a peer level to your Pictures folder and Documents folder and is a prime candidate to hold some large files that are no longer needed. Your Downloads folder might still contain the installation files for your printer from 2 years ago, as well as any other software or other files you might have downloaded over the years.



It is a good start to sort the files in Downloads by size to identify which downloads is hogging the most space. A sort by date might also reveal files that are no longer needed.

You should review the contents of the Downloads folder carefully, since by default any attachments to emails you have viewed, such as pictures or PDF documents (as well as any software) are saved to this folder.

It is common for users to download the same programs and email attachments more than once. You can easily identify duplicate copies of downloaded files. Duplicates will have the same file name as the original, but the file name will be followed by a (1) or (2), etc. and of course can be deleted.

During this review it is a good idea to move pictures and documents you want to save by moving them to the appropriate folder. This might also help you discover duplicates.

**Run CCleaner**

It is now time to clean up little bits and pieces by running the newly upgraded version of CCleaner. This program is not going to free a significant amount of space, so it is only important if you are running a small SSD drive. I would not bother to run the Registry cleaner, since this is very unlikely to yield a performance improvement and could cause problems with over aggressive cleaning.

Be sure to uninstall CCleaner after you run it, or you'll be forever plagued by popups.

**The Time-Consuming Part**

Now you're going to have to do the most tedious part of the job. Go through individual folders, such as your photographs, and delete blurry or redundant ones. Yes, you want to have backups of your favorite photos, but multiple copies of the same or virtually the same photo in the same directory provides little protection from loss. Digital cameras make it easy to take several pictures and most of us have saved many more shots of the same subject than we really need.

Your Documents folder also no doubt contains many documents that are no longer needed. Another massive folder still present might be the "Windows.old" folder that somehow wound up there. If you've recovered any files that might have been lost on your last major install of a Windows 10 Operating System, just delete the "Windows.old" folder to free up many gigabytes of space.

**Consider Cloud storage**

Cloud storage services such as Microsoft's OneDrive can hold files that might otherwise be cluttering your hard drive. You get 5 GB of OneDrive storage space with Windows, and if you need much more space you might have to pop for a subscription to Office 365, which provides 1 TB of storage.

Google Drive is similar to OneDrive and provides 15 GB of free storage and creates a mirrored folder on your hard drive, which you can use the same way as OneDrive. Google also provides unlimited picture and Google document storage, but photos are stored at a reduced resolution.

**One More Helpful tool - Wiztree**

Performance only suffers on a mechanical drive when it is over half full, and on an SSD as it begins to totally fill up. Still, there is usually no good reason to keep massive files on your C: (boot) drive. To find big files, a graphics representation is often the best option.

Wiztree (<http://antibody-software.com>) is a Shareware program that does a remarkably fast job of scanning your drive and seeing what files are taking up too much space. This program creates a graphic to help you visualize your drive.

Folder	Percent of Parent	Size	Allocated	Items	Files	Extension	File Type	Percent	Size	Allocated	Files
C:\	100.0%	168.6 GB	159.2 GB	546,171	474,142	.vhd	Hard Disk Image File	39.2%	66.6 GB	66.6 GB	3
Users	20.0%	101.2 GB	101.2 GB	169,138	151,050	.dll	Application extens	11.3%	19.1 GB	15.2 GB	28,512
Windows	23.6%	39.9 GB	32.0 GB	237,741	159,222	.jpg	JPG File	8.7%	14.8 GB	14.7 GB	15,569
Program Files	7.2%	12.1 GB	10.4 GB	107,288	96,564	(No Extension)	(No Extension)	7.5%	12.8 GB	11.2 GB	102,924
WindowsApps	91.5%	11.1 GB	9.4 GB	102,312	92,417	.msp	Windows Installer	6.0%	10.1 GB	10.1 GB	540
Intel	1.7%	213.2 MB	214.2 MB	657	535	.mp4	MP4 File	5.5%	9.3 GB	9.2 GB	768
Google	1.7%	209.0 MB	209.5 MB	334	311	.exe	Application	2.6%	4.4 GB	4.0 GB	4,202
Common Files	1.1%	142.1 MB	117.3 MB	1,100	902	.zip	Compressed (zipp	2.5%	4.3 GB	3.2 GB	908
microsoft shared	6.7%	94.8 MB	78.5 MB	292	224	.sys	System file	2.0%	3.5 GB	3.2 GB	1,805
LogiShrd	22.1%	31.4 MB	32.4 MB	649	541	.win	WIM File	1.0%	1.6 GB	1.6 GB	13
system	6.9%	9.7 MB	88.0 KB	65	58	.cab	Cabinet File	0.7%	1.3 GB	1.3 GB	471
Intel	1.7%	2.4 MB	2.4 MB	6	5	.dmp	DMP File	0.7%	1.2 GB	1.2 GB	113
AV	1.0%	1.4 MB	1.4 MB	6	5	.msi	Windows Installer	0.7%	1.2 GB	1.2 GB	137
Sony Shared	0.8%	1.2 MB	1.2 MB	17	14	.dat	DAT File	0.7%	1.1 GB	996.5 MB	6,183
QCA_Bluetooth	0.6%	826.0 KB	916.0 KB	50	50	.mov	VLC media file	0.5%	891.4 MB	891.6 MB	123
Windows	0.2%	333.7 KB	394.0 KB	3	3	.png	PNG file	0.4%	762.8 MB	716.7 MB	42,055
Atheros	0.0%	7.2 KB	8.0 KB	1	1	.xml	XML Document	0.4%	745.8 MB	487.8 MB	46,368
Services	0.0%	2.6 KB	0	1	1	.sst	Microsoft Serializ	0.4%	709.1 MB	710.1 MB	427
						.wmv	WMV File	0.3%	666.1 MB	570.6 MB	777

Note that when I ran Wiztree I identified a massive drive image file residing on my hard drive. I did not remember creating this file, but this happens when you run a backup imaging program without attaching a destination drive. I have seen this file on several computers I have examined, but never believed it would be on my system. I deleted this group of files and freed a massive amount of disk space.

As with CCleaner, you'll want to uninstall Wiztree when you are done with it.



Back to the Basics

**Do you know these Google Icons?**

By Jim Cerny, Forum Leader, Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL  
May 2019 issue, The STUG Monitor - [www.thestug.org](http://www.thestug.org) / [jimcerny123 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:jimcerny123@gmail.com)

				
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
				
<input type="text" value="6"/>	<input type="text" value="7"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	<input type="text" value="9"/>	<input type="text" value="10"/>
				
<input type="text" value="11"/>	<input type="text" value="12"/>	<input type="text" value="13"/>	<input type="text" value="14"/>	

The above icons represent some popular Google apps, do you recognize any of them? Write the name of the app in the box. All these apps are FREE with Google, all you need is a Google account. Still stuck on a few? Maybe you can match a description below to the icon above. Of course they are not in the same order, what would the fun be in that? (The answers are at the end of this article).

A— Google Earth -- Explore anyplace on the planet, zoom in or out, take tours, and enjoy the constantly improving 3D buildings and land formations. Absolutely dazzling!

B — Google DRIVE – Free software that works like Microsoft Office – you get Google Docs (word processing), Sheets (spreadsheets), Slides (presentations) and more. You can also put (upload) ANY of your files onto the drive to share with others and have them available anywhere. There is a small charge if you exceed the free 15 GB space amount.

C — YouTube – Now in the Google family. Search and find videos on ANY topic or any famous person. See videos from the past or from other countries. Great for entertainment! When you do a Google search on the internet you will most likely be presented with several videos. It is amazing the free videos you can find on YouTube!

D — Google MAPS – A great way to travel and get from place to place. Probably better than the map software used in your car. Plan your travels and compare alternate routes.

E — Google Translate – Translate from one language to another, super easy and super fun!

F — GMAIL – A great email app to do your email on all your devices.

G — Google Play – Entertainment access to movies, TV shows, books, music, and much more. Download or use charges may be applied.

H — Google PHOTOS – Use the camera on your smart phone and your photos will be uploaded to Google Photos for you, freeing up space on your device. Now you can see and work with your photos on any device.

I — Google Calendar – Keep all your appointments here. Can be synced to your iPhone.

J — Google Sheets (part of Google Drive) – Free word processor similar to Microsoft Word.

K — Google Contacts – One place for all your contacts. Can be synced to your iPhone.

L — Google News – A great source for news.

M — Google Slides (part of Google Drive) – Free presentation app for creating great slides for your talk similar to Microsoft PowerPoint.

N — Google Docs (part of Google Drive) – A great free word processor similar to Microsoft Word.

-- Answers on bottom of Page 11 --

---

## Interesting Articles, Websites and YouTube Videos - April

By George Cadmus, Editor, Northern Neck Computer User Group  
April 2019 issue, The Computer Link - geocadjr (at) verizon.net - www.nncug.org

### Are Cheap Windows and Office Programs a Scam?

Why those cheap Windows and Office programs don't last.

When every cent counts, as it does for most of us, cheap Windows and Microsoft Office software has an undoubted appeal. But, in addition to the question of whether this software is legal or ethical, buyers also face the risk that it'll stop working just when they need it most. In this week's issue we explain where some of this dubious software comes from and why it's best to give it a wide berth.

<http://scambusters.org/cheapwindows.html>

### Scammers Hide Behind Padlock Security Symbol to Trick Victims

That padlock icon in your browser address bar that you used to rely on to signal website safety can no longer be trusted — because crooks are now using them as well. In this week's Snippets issue, we'll explain what's happened to that once trusted symbol of security.

<https://scambusters.org/padlock.html>

### Undetectable Fileless Malware Threatens Businesses and Consumers

Most security software can't detect fileless malware attacks, so what can you do?

Fileless malware is one of the biggest challenges facing security software vendors — because they can't detect it. Right now, it's a growing threat to businesses but consumers could be next in the scammers' sights. So, what is fileless malware and is there anything you can do to protect your PC from infection?

We have some answers for you in this week's issue.

<https://scambusters.org/fileless.html>

### Why Do Computers Crash? Seven Reasons Why

It's a royal pain when your computer locks up, freezes, crashes, or displays the dreaded "Blue Screen of Death" with some cryptic error message. This sort of problem can be devilishly difficult to diagnose, because many things can cause a computer to crash (and burn!). Click on the link below to see seven common causes of computer crashes and some tips on how to deal with them.

[https://askbobrankin.com/why\\_do\\_computers\\_crash\\_seven\\_reasons\\_why.html](https://askbobrankin.com/why_do_computers_crash_seven_reasons_why.html)

### Dead Zone? Try a Wi-Fi Extender

Many homes have Wi-Fi "dead zones" where radio signals are weak or nonexistent. Wi-Fi extenders (also called Wi-Fi repeaters, range extenders, or wireless signal boosters) can fill such gaps, enabling your teenagers to keep their video gaming in the basement instead of taking over the living room couch. An extender can also let you live the dream of Web surfing in a hammock out in the back yard. Click on the link below to see some recommended gear to make it happen.

[https://askbobrankin.com/dead\\_zone\\_try\\_a\\_wifi\\_extender.html](https://askbobrankin.com/dead_zone_try_a_wifi_extender.html)

### If Computer Problems Were Real

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1jAr466DJc&list=PL7xx8NrKxC\\_xycicFdEUqnEu0Wm\\_U8VMp](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1jAr466DJc&list=PL7xx8NrKxC_xycicFdEUqnEu0Wm_U8VMp)

### Amazon Echo

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvT\\_gqs5ETk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvT_gqs5ETk)

### Italian Grandma Hilariously Learns How to Use Google Home Device

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6e1qd5xggc>

---

## President's Corner

### **No Joy in Techvill?**

by Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA  
April 2019 issue, Drive Light - [www.uchug.org](http://www.uchug.org) - [president \(at\) uchug.org](mailto:president@uchug.org)

Pour a liquid into a glass just up to the midpoint. An optimist would say the glass is half full. A pessimist would say the glass is half empty. An engineer would say the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

A lot of how we perceive reality is influenced by our internal biases and past experiences. As an engineer, I'm used to looking at things in a more clinical, objective way than others might. My wife thinks I am a pessimist, seeing the worst in everything and having a negative point of view. She feels I should be more positive and optimistic. If only I had a better attitude, things would be better. I prefer to think of myself as a pragmatist, dealing with and reacting to things in a more practical manner. I prefer the objective, based on facts, rather than the subjective, dealing with feelings and opinions, to make my decisions.

My wife and I also differ on how we perceive stuff, those material things we own. I have a lot of interests, including technology, and so I have accumulated a lot of stuff. My wife is more of a minimalist and thinks I have too much stuff. Who is right? Again, I think it is a matter of perception. What may be clutter to one person may just be the result of too little storage space to another person.

My attitudes about things are probably shaped a lot by my Midwest farm heritage. My Czech farmer ancestors came to this country in the late 1800's and made the best livings they could farming and raising livestock in Nebraska. There is a lot to admire in the farmer. While farming is a lot of hard work and you often don't have a lot of control over your situation (the weather, resources, crop markets, pests), you usually must become very resourceful, creative and self-sufficient in order to succeed. Farmers must often also be mechanics, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, weathermen and veterinarians. My grandfather had a blacksmith shop on his farm so that he could fabricate items he needed, as there was no Home Depot on every (or any) corner. Farmers must also be conservationists, ecologists and stewards of the lands, animals and environment. I still have relatives that actively farm, and though things have obviously changed for farmers since my grandfather's time, I think a lot the values remain.

The time I spent on the farm in my youth probably helped instill those values and attitudes in me. I've tried to learn all I can about mechanics, engineering, electronics, computers and technology. I've built my own computers and maintain, debug and repair my devices myself as much as possible. I've become the family IT help person, network administrator, repairman and system integrator. As a result, I've accumulated a lot of devices, accessories, cables, adapters, software, tools and utilities over the years, probably way more than most other people. Of course, the collection does not remain static either, for as technology advances and new devices, interfaces and services become popular, my collection of stuff must expand to support them.

Unfortunately, it is often difficult to determine when something that used to be essential (or at least useful) has become obsolete and of no use and should be disposed of. I bought extra PATA (parallel ATA) hard drives at one time when the computer industry was transitioning to SATA (serial ATA) drives, in order to be able to support some of my older computers. I've gotten rid of some of the drives but am still running a couple old machines that could use them, so I continue to keep a few around. I have a number of devices for slide scanning and digitizing video that I need to be using, but I never seem to find the time. To my wife, all these things I'm not currently using are obsolete and junk and should be thrown away. To me they still hold promise; I have the hope that I will eventually get to use them productively again. Now who sounds like the optimist, and who's the pessimist?

I agree that clutter can be a problem but reducing it and organizing things requires time. Early in my career, I found it difficult to keep up with the number of engineering magazines and component reviews I was receiving at work. I'd scan the items for usefulness, but making a binary judgment (1 or 0, keep or toss) right at that moment was difficult. A few things obviously went right in the trash, a few were keepers, but the majority were in that gray area - might be useful, but maybe not right now. I'd sometimes toss things and later wish I could get them back. Rather than waste my time deciding at the moment I received them, I found it easier to put the 'gray area' items in a pile in my office. If I found a need, I could consult the pile for the items that were pertinent. After a year, I'd split the pile in two, and throw away the older half, assuming the information in it was now likely out of date. This worked very well for me. My wife was not happy when I tried to use this method at home, however.

Technology has helped some with physical decluttering, as most information now comes in or can be converted to an electronic form that can be saved on small memory devices or deleted easily. There is the problem of organizing all those files, however. I am now a believer in the all-digital / electronic life, in as much as it is possible. I used to have file cabinets full of financial papers and product documentation. Now I get all my important documents in pdf form online and scan any paper forms I receive. I used to save the paper manuals for things I bought and filed them away; now I download them and / or scan them. All my important documents, product info, photographs and videos are contained on a few small hard drives. They are not only easier to store but also safer, as I can easily keep copies of the data in a fire safe, safety deposit box or offsite location. If only storing our physical possessions were so easy.

There is a Japanese woman that has become a decluttering celebrity. Marie Kondo, cleaning consultant, author of the bestselling book *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* and star of a related Netflix TV series, has a unique way of determining what to keep and

what to discard. I've not read her book or seen her show, but her method, from what I've read about it, involves holding each item, asking yourself if it 'sparks joy', and discarding it if it does not. Those (apparently) few items that do bring you joy are then placed where they are visible and accessible.

I have wondered whether her declutter method could work for me and my tech collection. While putting my hands on every single individual item I own might take some time (I have a medium-sized plastic bin of action camera mounts and accessories alone), the bigger problem I see is the hang up I've always had - determining the worth of the items in my life. What does it mean to 'spark joy'? How does one define joy?

The dictionary (or at least Google) defines joy as "a feeling of great pleasure and happiness." Other equivalent terms might be delight, jubilation, rejoicing, elation, bliss, ecstasy and rapture. Those terms don't seem to describe any tech items I own. This standard also seems very subjective. Everyone's idea of joy could be different, perhaps very different. It reminds me of one of my favorite lines from the original *Star Wars - A New Hope*; it is Han Solo's response to Luke Skywalker, when Luke was trying to persuade him to help rescue Princess Leia. Luke tells Han that Leia is rich, and the reward he would get would be more wealth than he could imagine. Han replied, "I don't know, I can imagine quite a bit."

Nevertheless, I decided to try Marie Kondo's declutter method on a small part of my home office, as I wanted to clear some space to install an Amazon Echo Dot there. The area I was clearing had only quite old things, which sparked negligible joy, so tossing them seemed easy, but I paused on two items. One was a set of Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 98 CDs, for Windows 95. I was going to toss them, but then thought about how things have changed. Once these were valuable and useful sources for information, but now with Google, Wikipedia and the Internet, they are obsolete drink coasters. Into the trash they went.

The other was a Webster's New World College Dictionary (2005 edition), which had been a gift from my wife. It too had been supplanted by the Internet. Though it did not spark joy, I felt a twinge of sentiment over it, as it had been a well-intentioned gift, and would be useful if some calamity caused the Internet to go away. I kept it.

The more I think about it, the more I feel that perhaps none of my tech items could truly spark joy. Do I feel delight when using my laptop? No. Am I rejoicing when holding my Chromebook? I like my Chromebook and it is very useful, but I am sometimes dismayed when I can't do something simple on it effortlessly, as I can on my Windows PC. Do I feel elation when holding my digital camera? I like it pretty well, but I somehow accidentally got it into a funny mode, and only recently, after much grief, figured out how to give it a factory reset and return it to normal settings.

Am I in a state of bliss when holding my smart phone? It is a very useful device, and I do seem to use it more and more, but I don't long for it or anything like that. I do see a lot of people who can't seem to put their smart phones down, when in a restaurant, while walking, or while driving. Is that bliss I see in their eyes? It looks to me more like a vacant hollow zombie-like stare. No joy.

I don't think this Marie Kondo declutter approach works that well for technology, or for most items (or perhaps for any items). There is unfortunately a lot more to life than joy and rapture. A lot of things in our lives are necessary not for the joy they bring but for the benefits they provide, the needs they fill and improvements they make in our quality of life. Is that joy? Not really. I don't feel joy when I hold my toothbrush, but I'm not going to get rid of it, as a little clutter in the bathroom is better than a mouthful of rotten teeth eventually.

And it might be asking a lot to expect Microsoft and Apple and Google and Samsung to be responsible for providing us with joy. That's what family and friends are for. The tech devices these companies do provide can help us keep in touch with them. We just shouldn't let the devices get in the way.

---

## You may have a new speech recognition program

By Jerry Heaton, Editor, Central Kentucky Computer Society  
May 2019 issue, CKCS Newsletter - [www.ckcs.org](http://www.ckcs.org) - [j.heaton \(at\) ckcs.org](mailto:j.heaton@ckcs.org)

I have used several speech recognition programs over the years. I have tried them all, and suddenly a new one showed up on my computer and it is the best one yet!

After completing the dictation, I edited the text produced by my dictation following this pattern:

In the paragraphs below, all the black words are the result of my dictation.

If I find a word I did not say, or a word misunderstood by MS speech recognition I will change the black word to **RED** and draw a line through it.

Any word I correct or added manually will be in **GREEN** which I typed.

There were a couple of places improper grammar was substituted for what I said, i.e. I said have and it entered had another time I said pay and it used paid, etc.

All the black text below was dictated.

All of us using Windows 10 are very aware that periodically Microsoft updates the program and makes changes the way things are done. Maybe I should have said improvements and corrections instead of changes. Nonetheless, that happens. I am also a **sub-graber-subscriber** to Microsoft Office 365 for which I **paid pay** an annual fee and get periodic updates and corrections to it as well.

Today I wish to talk about a new feature that showed up unexpectedly on my Microsoft Word ribbon bar. Under the home tab they've added a section to the right labeled voice and it's a small microphone under which it says dictate.

Speech recognition is not new. The first demonstration I ever saw of it was about in **1990-4-1994** at a Complex Show sponsored by CKCS in downtown Lexington at the Convention Center. That product worked well at the show but those that bought the program **Were were** greatly disappointed.

I have used speech recognition from time to time **an and** each time I've tried it, it's better than before but those still proved to be more trouble **then than** it was worth since it made multiple errors in understanding what I said and secondly the thought process I used of producing text is not always in the order you would normally write that text. In other words, I was not very skilled **add at** dictation.

This article is being dictated and I am not touching the keyboard for any part of it. For speech recognition one should use a headset microphone. I had one of those but have chosen to **used-use my** microphone on my camera for this project. All I can say is speech recognition program writers **had have** come a long long way since those early days. This is working remarkably well.

We are on paragraph 5 and all of this has been dictated without touching the keyboard.

I have noticed that this new microphone icon at the right of the ribbon bar is also on Microsoft's outlook program which I use for email, as well as PowerPoint.

It is obvious that if one is interested in getting a lot of text quickly onto a page, speech recognition is clearly the way to do that. The voice icon section was added by Microsoft Office 365

If you find the **voice** icon, give it a try.

---

Answers to: Do you know these Google Icons? article on Page 6

Answers: 1-E 2-L 3-F 4-I 5-N 6-H 7-K 8-J 9-C 10-G 11-B 12-D 13-A 14-M

## Brain Dead In San Diego

By Art Gresham, Editor, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA  
May 2019 issue, Drive Light - [www.uchug.org](http://www.uchug.org) - 1editor101 (at)uchug.org

Sunday, March 31st, was "World Back Up Day." Even if you don't do a complete system backup, please back up your important documents (i.e.- photos, videos, office docs, PDF files and any other files you deem important to you) to a USB drive, CD/DVD, external HD or the Cloud. Take the pledge and spread the word.

### THE WORLD BACKUP DAY PLEDGE

"I solemnly swear to back up my important documents and precious memories on March 31st." I will also tell my friends and family about World Backup Day - friends don't let friends go without a backup.

Did you read the World Backup Day information in UCHUG's March newsletter? The editor sure did. He (by which I mean I) put it there. So for the 64-cent question. Did I do a backup? No. Bad on me I guess. But no harm done. Right? Not so fast there buck'o.

As I started building the current newsletter (and following the scare raised by the Email issue our President reported this month) I was looking at the screen when it began having very weird patterns of color flashing over the entire screen. Quick as a wink I thought I should get a photo of it in case it turns in to something. Fishing my cell phone out of my pocket, and looking up, suddenly the color patches were gone. Back to normal screen. Strange but oh well. Grab the mouse and go back to work.....work... come on mouse WORK. Nope. No Work. No keyboard, No mouse, no Nuttin.

Power off, by brute force (power strip) and back on. Nothing. Not even the familiar Beep Beep, and CMOS screen. Nothing. Cycle power and try again. Nothing. Deep breathing. Go practice some Yoga. Or VooDoo. Calmly go to bed and hope it heals itself over night. Hey, it's been known to happen.

So now it's the next morning. Power on. YEAAAA, it boots like normal; everything is well again..... for about two minutes then.... Color patches. Frozen mouse and Keyboard. Dead.

So now I need a spare computer to use and try to get back on track. Perhaps the hard drive is still intact. I calmly disconnected the machine - a Gateway brand. Fortunately I have my older generation computer, a Dell, still sitting beside my working system (which is no longer working). The Dell boots up right where it left off last October when last it was powered up. A starting point. Pull it out and remove the Gateway hard drive and place it in the Dell. They are similar 1 TB drives so no real compatibility issues. I expect it will work, with just slight performance reduction because of a slower CPU.

At this point many, or most, of you are saying. Wait. You can't just swap a hard drive into a completely different CPU box. The operating system will complain and you will have to go through a bunch of fixes to get it to recognize all the different hardware. Wrong. You must think I am using some proprietary operating system like Windoze 7 or 8 or 9 or 10!!? Nope. Both systems were running Linux, Mint 17 and 18. More significantly, upon taking my up-to-date system hard drive, putting it into the older CPU box, and giving it power -- it instantly recognizes everything, mouse, keyboard, internet connection. Boots up to exactly where I left it on the broken machine yesterday morning. I have lost nothing much more than time and some worry. Of course the operations are slightly slower. But much faster than DEAD.

So at this point you may think I resumed building the Drive Light. You would be wrong. The first thing I did was to start a backup. And there is the moral of the story. Back up, Back up, Back up! You never know when the computer will die and you may not be so lucky as to be able to perform a 'brain-ectomy' to bring your data back to life. Moving on now. Got a newsletter to put together.

---

Dan's Desk

## **What happens in the downloading process vs. the saving process on a computer?**

By Dan Douglas, President, Space Coast PCUG, FL

June 2019 issue, The Space Coast PC Journal - Datadan (at) msn.com - www.scpcug.com

This month I'll take discuss a couple of topics that were passed along as suggestions. We really do want your suggestions for topics to discuss, so please pass them along!

Once you click on a 'Download' button within a page loaded in a browser, depending upon the specific browser being used and the default download setting selected in that browser, one of two actions can occur: the file selected to be downloaded will be automatically downloaded to the specified directory chosen in the browser settings **or** you will be prompted to 'Run or Save/Save As' the file to be downloaded. If 'Run' is chosen, typically the file will be downloaded to a temporary directory located under a hidden directory within your User Account directory, and then immediately opened/executed. If 'Save' is chosen the file will be downloaded to the default directory. The 'Save As' option will allow you to select which directory you want to save the downloaded file into. You may have to click on the drop-down list next to 'Save' to see the 'Save As' option on some browsers. In the case of both 'Save' and 'Save as,' the file will not be opened or executed until it is selected after the download process has completed.

### ***How necessary is it to clear downloads?***

On Windows 10, under the System settings, there is an option for Storage. Within Storage, you can turn on 'Storage sense' which will automatically remove temporary files and empty the recycle bin when required, based upon your choices. With the large sizes of hard drives available these days, storage is rarely used up and therefore the presence of a 100 or more downloaded files will not be noticeable, unless they are each many gigabytes in size, such as with a movie file. In that case, you may want to move the files that you want to keep to external storage, such as a USB drive, before deleting them from the Downloads folder.

### ***Where are downloads stored?***

Depending upon your browser and the settings you have made within it, the actual downloads location can be anywhere. The common default is to use the Windows provided Downloads folder that is automatically created for you in Windows 8 and up. This folder is part of the default set of folders created when you set up your account along with Desktop, Documents, Favorites, Pictures, Music, Videos, etc. My recommendation is to always use these default locations or a directory that you create within them. This way all backup programs and migration tools will always find your files and handle them correctly.

### ***Do downloads of docs and programs need to be saved even after installation or saving to a drive??***

As a general rule, no. The exceptions would be for programs that you purchase and may need to keep if the ability to download it in the future will expire, or if you want to keep the files for re-use on another PC or at another time.

### ***Can you itemize the security steps that all browser and email users should have checked in their settings?***

My philosophy with tailoring the settings within browsers is the same for what I tell 99% of all users (and which I follow myself) is to simply use the defaults for both the email and browser settings. Microsoft, Google, and other major browser OEMs have done a good job of recognizing the need to both protect the users of their products as well as the need to provide for good usability. You may have additional security tools in place that will also provide for screening of websites and email attachments which offer much higher levels of protection than what the browsers can provide.

### ***What encryption protections do providers utilize and are there specific ones that users should use in addition?***

If we are looking at web or email security, then the security and encryption are set by the hosting website. Typically when you log onto a financial institution, for example, you'll see the web address uses the prefix

of 'HTTPS:'. This means that that website is using the SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) protocol to communicate, which is a layer of encryption employed by that site to protect the transfer of data.

I'm not a big fan of Hard Drive data encryption because of the number of times I have seen all sorts of situations where the loss of data has occurred. Encryption is normally used where a requirement to meet specific government or corporate standards is in place, or if privacy issues are present. Encryption also comes with a significant increase in processor usage, making many computers noticeable slower. Windows 10 Professional does offer BitLocker which can encrypt a drive or folders. If the key used to encrypt the data is ever lost, all data on that drive, or in that folder(s), may no longer be accessible.

If you have suggestions for other topics like this, that you would like to see explained, please let me know!

---

Webmaster Wanderings

## **Aukey USB Outlet with Night Light Plug-in**

By Curt Potsic, Webmaster, Space Coast PCUG, FL

June 2019 issue, The Space Coast Journal - [www.scpcug.com](http://www.scpcug.com) - [cmpotsic \(at\) att.net](mailto:cmpotsic@att.net).

I spotted this Aukey USB outlet with Night Light Plug-in on Amazon one day. It was on sale for \$6 off the \$19.99 price and I thought it was a good deal for \$13.99.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B074MVWM6V>



It's a wall outlet that has 4 AC receptacles and 2 USB charging ports on the sides along with a night light on the front. Plus it also has surge protection. It can be used in a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, etc.

We have it in the kitchen where it's ideal for charging cell phones and tablets. The photo on Amazon's site shows it charging a cell phone resting on the top ledge but I found it also works fine with 7" or 8" tablets resting on its top ledge. Also the night light brightness varies with how dark it is and can be turned off with the circular button below the light panel.

What intrigued me was this looked like a great way to charge my wife's Fire HD 8 Tablet. She has a compatible 7th generation tablet which has "Show Mode." The HD 8 Tablet in Show Mode has basically the same functionality as an Echo Show which has a 10" screen but sells for \$229.99. With the Aukey Outlet serving as a stand, the tablet in Show Mode was perfect just resting against the wall above the kitchen counter. This sure beat buying Amazon's Show Mode Charging Dock for \$39.99

<https://www.amazon.com/All-New-Charging-Compatible-Generation-Tablets/dp/B07BNXZDJ3>.

Plus with Amazon's Charging Dock you have to remove the tablet's protective cover for the dock's charging socket to fit into place. With the Aukey unit the tablet's protective cover stays on and a standard USB charging cable is used.

